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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 AMMAN 002199

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [KWBG](#) [KPAL](#) [IS](#) [JO](#)

SUBJECT: GOJ REMAINS WILLING TO SUPPORT ABU MAZEN IF ASKED

Classified By: Ambassador David Hale for reasons 1.4 (B) and (D)

1. (C) Summary: King Abdullah told LTG Keith Dayton that Jordan wants to bolster PA President Abbas' position, and, if asked, is ready to help build the capacity of security services under Abbas' direct control. Jordan will not give any assistance to forces under the authority of Hamas. Foreign Minister Al-Khatib was skeptical that Hamas could transform itself into a governing party. Khatib highlighted the symbolic importance of LTG Dayton's continuing presence in the region, and urged that his mandate continue. End Summary.

"Count Us In"

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2. (C) King Abdullah met with U.S. Security Coordinator LTG Keith Dayton and the Ambassador March 19. LTG Dayton outlined PA President Mahmoud Abbas' (Abu Mazen) request for assistance from the U.S. in building a capacity for security planning within the Palestinian President's staff and increasing the capabilities of the Presidential Guard. The King replied "count us in." Jordan wanted to see a unified security structure within the Palestinian Authority, but wanted Hamas to "keep its fingers out." In the wake of Hamas' victory, Abu Mazen needed support and must remain focused. Dayton emphasized that the USG has not yet made a policy decision on Abu Mazen's request. Intelligence chief Mohammed Dhahabi (who also attended the meeting) commented that the recent Israeli raid into Jericho was humiliating for Abu Mazen, who now needed support and a strengthened hand. Dhahabi was also concerned that as Hamas took control over the PA and its security services, it will push out Fatah leadership, a situation that may result in chaos within the ranks of the services. The King stressed that the GOJ would not support security services under the leadership of Hamas. The King closed the meeting by reassuring LTG Dayton and the Ambassador that Jordan would provide "110 percent support" to U.S. efforts in support of Abu Mazen and the security services under his control; the U.S. only needed to ask.

In Favor of Strengthening Abu Mazen

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3. (C) Earlier in the day, Foreign Minister Abdelilah al-Khatib expressed similar views to LTG Dayton. "We do not hesitate in supporting Abu Mazen. We are more determined now, after the elections." The Minister referred to prior GoJ training of the presidential guard, and stated that the GoJ was under the King's orders to support the presidential guard, including with arms and ammunition, if asked. "The USG should see no hesitation on Jordan's part." In evaluating the present situation, he said the role of the Quartet and other interested parties should be to encourage Abu Mazen not to resign, as he was the "only one that we can work with." The Minister saw no domestic concerns with providing support to the Palestinian presidency, and he argued that much needs to be done to strengthen Abu Mazen's position, as his resignation or the dissolution of the PA would result in chaos. The Minister focused on the importance of continuation of LTG Dayton's mission as a symbol of U.S. commitment to the Palestinians, the peace process, and the two-state solution. He expressed his hope that Dayton's mandate would continue.

Assessing HAMAS

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4. (C) FM Khatib delivered a negative assessment of Hamas' ability to transition into a governing party. He argued, and LTG Dayton agreed, that Hamas's Islamist agenda does not match the desires of the majority of the Palestinian people. Should Hamas successfully transform itself and adopt the principles outlined by the Quartet, "fine; but if not, then Hamas will likely collapse" due to lack of popular support. He already saw some elements of Hamas' social agenda beginning to play out in Gaza; Hamas had distributed pamphlets, he said, calling for the closure of internet cafes, as they could be used to download pornography. Khatib compared the rise of Hamas to the assumption by the Islamic Action Front (the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood's political party) of five ministerial positions in 1991. Within two months, he recalled, the Jordanian public was demanding the

ouster of the IAF ministers.

15. (C) The Minister stated that Jordanians have no illusions about the ability of Hamas to transform itself into a government, and that pressure needed to remain on Hamas to ensure that it is accountable and responsible. If and when Hamas collapses, Khatib was concerned that outsiders not been seen as the cause; such a perception would be counterproductive and only benefit Hamas and "regional powers." The Minister urged the U.S. to take a wait-and-see approach to adjust to facts as they change on the ground, rather than bind our future actions by making strong declarations or passing binding legislation now.

Comment
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16. (C) The statements by the King and FM Khatib on Jordan's willingness, if asked, to help train and equip responsible Palestinian security forces reiterate long-standing GOJ policy. End comment.

17. (C) This message was cleared by LTG Dayton.
HALE